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The Ever Changing Classroom of the Future

The model classroom of the future will look very different than the classrooms of old. There will be a different look, feel, and structure to the classroom than what many people remember from when they went to school. There are six areas that the Horizon Report has listed that we as educators must focus on to ensure our students continue to be prepared for the changing technological world in which we are living. These six areas of focus are divided into short term, midterm, and long term goals that need to be reached in different increments.

The first area that we are going to look at is the Mobile Device & App area. The Horizon Report states that this area should be adopted and put into place in one year or less. Tim Walker wrote for NEA.org that, “According to some estimates, smart phones, and to a lesser extent tablets like the iPad, will be in the hands of every student in the United States within five years. And as more schools embrace mobile learning, the number of education apps—mobile applications that run on your smart phone—are skyrocketing.” Students will have a greater accessibility to mobile devices and applications as time goes by. Educators must embrace this accessibility in their classrooms to assist students in their education. Students can use their own devices to access content on the internet, receive messages from the teacher, organize and complete assignments on their devices. Classrooms of the future will use this tool to assist students daily by allowing increased accessibility to real time content and communications.

Tablet computing is also part of the Horizon Report that needs to be implemented in the first year or less. Tablet computers have become more accessible for many individuals with their

price being considerably less than a desktop or laptop computer. “When the iPad first debuted in 2010, it very quickly made its way into schools as an educational tool. It was less expensive than a traditional laptop and turned out to be a powerful learning device” (Smith, 2012). Tablets with their smaller size, increased capabilities, and functionality will be essential for the classroom in the future. Many schools are purchase iPads for students and teachers to use in the classroom. Tablets are allowing students to work collaboratively on projects and assignments in real time with up to date information.

Game Based Learning is the new wave of the future. This type of learning is a midterm goal and should be implemented within two to three years. Game based learning allows students to use their gaming skills to solve problems, find information, and interact with others in different learning environments. In an Edutopia article, game based learning stated benefits of this model for students because it, “demands a "need to know" the content. In order to complete quests and boss levels, students will need to learn content and skills to do them. Instead of pre-teaching, the instructor teaches the material or facilitates the learning of material as students are engaged in the quests” (Miller, 2011). This will change how students are engaged in the classrooms in the very near future.

Personal Learning Environments has also been included in the Horizon Report. PLE’s should be in place by year two or three. PLE’s allow teachers to create personal learning communities for each student. The communities can be based on student abilities, areas of strengths, or remediation of information. PLE’s are extremely important for student success in the future of classrooms.

Augmented Reality and Natural User Interfaces are the last areas that are addressed in the Horizon Report. They are both the wave of the future of educational technology usage in the classroom. These will take students to new and exciting places and give them opportunities that they have not

experienced before. All of these areas must be used to benefit our students and work together to keep the progression toward the future in the forefront of our minds.

References:

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